

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for selectively replacing objectionable content in a program received as a first signal with less-objectionable content, comprising:
  - an extraction device receiving at least a portion of the first signal and configured to extract information therefrom;
  - a replacement control device;
  - a processor operatively coupled to said replacement control device and communicatively coupled to said extraction device for receiving at least a portion of said extracted information therefrom;
  - a memory coupled to said processor and storing a replacement criterion;
  - said processor programmed to identify replacement information in said extracted information;
  - a second signal including said less-objectionable content communicatively coupled to said replacement control device;
  - said processor programmed to cause said replacement control device to replace a portion of the first signal with said second signal in response to identifying replacement information that satisfies said replacement criterion.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said less-objectionable content comprises advertising.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first signal is selected from the group consisting of:
  - a video signal,
  - an audio signal,

a broadband signal,  
an optical signal,  
an amplitude modulated signal,  
a frequency modulated signal,  
a phase-modulated signal  
a Digital Radio Broadcast signal,  
a broadcast television signal,  
a cable television signal,  
a RF signal, and  
an internet signal.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said second signal is selected from the group consisting of:

a video signal,  
an audio signal,  
a broadband signal,  
an optical signal,  
an amplitude modulated signal,  
a frequency modulated signal,  
a phase-modulated signal  
a Digital Radio Broadcast signal,  
a broadcast television signal,  
a cable television signal,  
a RF signal, and

an internet signal.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement control device is selected from the group consisting of:

a photograph replacement device,

a holograph replacement device,

an audio replacement device, and

a video replacement device.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information is selected from the group consisting of:

a photograph replacement information,

a holograph replacement information,

audio replacement information, and

video replacement information.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement criterion is selected from the group consisting of:

a photograph replacement criterion,

a holograph replacement criterion,

an audio replacement criterion, and

a video replacement criterion.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information is present in a vertical blanking interval of the first signal.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information is present in a line 21 of the first signal.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said replacement information is present in a Text field of the first signal.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a duration the first signal is to be replaced in response to said replacement information satisfying said replacement criterion.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a word present in the first signal.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said information relating to said word is compared with a sensing criterion stored in said memory to determine whether to replace the word in the first signal.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information represents a word that is present in the first signal in an encoded form.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes content selected from the group consisting of:

information identifying a portion of the first signal having violent content;  
information identifying a portion of the first signal having sexual content, and  
information identifying a portion of the first signal having potentially objectionable language.

16. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a channel in which the objectionable content is present.

17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to an area of a display screen to be obscured in order to replace the objectionable content.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said area of the display screen is less than the entire display screen.

19. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a location in the first signal at which the replacing should begin.

20. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a time in the first signal at which the replacing should begin.

21. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a level of intensity of the objectionable content.

22. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

said memory contains a plurality of words stored therein;

said extraction device is configured to extract a closed caption signal from the first signal;

said processor receives said extracted closed caption signal and is programmed to compare words in said extracted closed caption signal with said words stored in said memory; and

said processor causes said replacement device to replace an audio signal in response to determining that a word stored in said memory is present in said extracted closed caption signal.

23. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said replacement criterion is received from a user.

24. A method selectively replacing objectionable content in a first signal intended for viewing on a display screen with less-objectionable content, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a replacement criterion in a memory;  
receiving said less-objectionable content as a second signal;  
receiving the first signal;  
extracting replacement information from the first signal;  
determining whether said replacement information satisfies said replacement criterion; and

replacing a portion of the first signal with the second signal in response to determining that said replacement information satisfies said replacement criterion.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said first signal is selected from the group consisting of:

- a video signal,
- an audio signal,
- a broadband signal,
- an optical signal,
- an amplitude modulated signal,
- a frequency modulated signal,
- a phase-modulated signal
- a Digital Radio Broadcast signal,
- a broadcast television signal,
- a cable television signal,
- a RF signal, and
- an internet signal.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein said second signal is selected from the

group consisting of:

- a video signal,
- an audio signal,
- a broadband signal,
- an optical signal,
- an amplitude modulated signal,
- a frequency modulated signal,
- a phase-modulated signal
- a Digital Radio Broadcast signal,
- a broadcast television signal,
- a cable television signal,
- a RF signal, and
- an internet signal.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information is selected from the group consisting of:

- a photograph replacement information,
- a holograph replacement information,
- audio replacement information, and
- video replacement information.

28. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement criterion is selected from the group consisting of:

- a photograph replacement criterion,
- a holograph replacement criterion,

an audio replacement criterion, and

an video replacement criterion.

29. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information is present in a vertical blanking interval of the first signal.

30. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information is present in a line 21 of the first signal.

31. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information is present in a Text field of the first signal.

32. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a duration the first signal should be replaced in response to said replacement information satisfying said replacement criterion.

33. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a word that is present in the first signal.

34. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes data representing a word that is present in the first signal in an encoded form.

35. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information is selected from the group consisting of:

information identifying a portion of the first signal having violent content;

information identifying a portion of the first signal having sexual content, and

information identifying a portion of the first signal having potentially objectionable language.

36. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a channel in which objectionable content is present.

37. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to an area of a display screen to be obscured in order to replace the objectionable content.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said information relating to said area of the display screen is less than the entire display screen.

39. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a location in the first signal said replacement should begin.

40. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to a relative time in the first signal said replacement should begin.

41. The method of claim 24, wherein said replacement information includes information relating to the level of intensity of the objectionable content.

42. The method of claim 24, further including:

storing a plurality of words in said memory;

extracting a closed caption signal from the first signal;

comparing said closed caption signal with said words stored in said memory; and

replacing the word in an audio signal with less-objectionable content in response to determining that a word in said memory is present in said closed caption signal.

43. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of receiving said replacement criterion from a user.

44. The method of claim 24, wherein said less-objectionable content comprises advertising.